



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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[Japan] Iaponia (with the Island of Korea)

Stock#: 64751
Map Maker: Hondius
Date: 1619 circa
Place: Amsterdam
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 17.5 x 13.5 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Nice example of Hondius' map of Japan and Korea, published in the middle of the 17th century and showing one of the greatest cartographic myths. This is one of the finest early Dutch maps of the region, first published in 1606.

The map is based upon the Ortelius-Teixeira map of 1595. It shows Korea as an island and the three principal islands of Japan and part of China. Hondius, in his text is published notes that it was not yet certain whether Korea was an island or part of the mainland.

The map is embellished with sea monsters, a Japanese junk and a Dutch galleon. It can be distinguished from the later Jansson edition, which replaces the junk with a European vessel.

This map is considered a milestone in the cartography of Japan. It remained the standard map of the region until Martini's map of 1655.

Early mapping of Japan in Dutch atlases

As stated above, the present map is based on a 1592 manuscript map by Portuguese Jesuit Luíz Teixeira, *Iaponiae Insulae Descriptio*, which was published in Abraham Ortelius' famed atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, in 1595. It was the first map of Japan to be separately published in Europe and, later, the first map of Japan in an atlas.

This 1606 map was published in the first Amsterdam edition of Gerardus Mercator's important atlas.



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Mercator's atlas was published in various forms for nearly a century. At first, the atlas was not extremely successful, as it competed with *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*. However, after Jodocus Hondius got possession of Mercator's plates from his heirs, he published the 1606 edition of the atlas with thirty-six new maps, including *Iaponia*. New editions in various languages were published regularly over the next several decades, with control passing to Jodocus' son Henricus after the former's death in 1612.

Korea as an island

One of the most striking features of the present map is its depiction of Korea as a long, narrow island. This reflects Europeans' lack of knowledge of the peninsula in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While Portuguese missionaries and traders were active in both China and Japan by the middle of the sixteenth century, they had little to no direct interaction with Korea.

For his 1592 manuscript map, Teixeira likely had direct access to Japanese sources who provided accurate geographical information for that country. He also likely drew on the letters of Jesuit missionaries in Japan at that time. He may have had access to the sketches of Portuguese cartographer Ignacio Morera (or Montera), who visited Japan in 1584 and after. However, sources for information on Korea were even more scarce. The first European to visit the country was Father Gregorio de Cespedes, accompanied by a Japanese friar, in 1593, a year after Teixeira drew his map.

There are a few European maps of this period that correctly identify Korea as a peninsula—a 1588 map by Diogo Homem and a 1630 map by Luíz Teixeira's son, João Teixeira. A much more accurate map of this entire region by Martino Martini was published by Joan Blaeu in 1655, by which time the Portuguese trading presence in neighboring areas allowed for increased knowledge. Despite this, Korea continued to be depicted as an island on many maps until the late eighteenth century.

European Interaction with Japan

The fact that the present map replicates the same limited geography of Japan and Korea more than forty years after Teixeira's original map demonstrates the decreasing contact between Europeans and Japan starting in the late sixteenth century.

European navigators, mainly from Spain and Portugal, first arrived in Japan in 1542 or 1543. Portuguese Jesuit missionaries were active in the country beginning in 1549, with the arrival of Jesuit priest Francis Xavier. While the missionaries were at first tolerated by the Japanese, their forceful proselytizing made it increasingly difficult for Christianity to coexist with existing religions. Thus, the first expulsion of missionaries took place in 1587.



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With their presence again leading to conflict in the early seventeenth century, shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu issued an edict in 1614 to suppress Christianity in Japan. With the issue still not settled, a series of three Exclusion Decrees issued in the 1630s to diminish non-Japanese influences effectively banned Christianity and isolated the country from Europe. The first decree, issued in 1633, only allowed licensed Japanese ships to trade overseas. The second decree, issued in 1635, prevented Japanese nationals from leaving Japan or returning from other countries. The third decree, issued in 1639, expelled the Portuguese from Japan completely, limiting entry to Chinese and Dutch merchants. This isolation would continue for more than two hundred years, until the end of the Edo period.

These historical events contribute to the present map's depiction of a fascinating, if flawed, geography that includes Korea as an island.

Detailed Condition:

Minor toning at the centerfold.